

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CONAKR 00406 201611Z

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ACTION OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EA-06 ISO-00 INT-05 EB-07 COME-00 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0575

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 0406

PASS OPIC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EMIN GV US

SUBJECT: BOKE PROJECT

1. LOCAL HALCO REP HAS STILL NOT HAD ANY RESPONSE TO HALCO REQUEST FOR HIGH LEVEL MEETING WITH GOG OFFICIALS CONCERNING BAUXITE EXPORT TAX.

2. VISIT OF OPIC REP CONCIDED WITH VISIT OF SEVERAL HALCO PEOPLE FROM US. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM, AS WELL AS WITH LOCAL HALCO OFFICIALS, THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER ELABORATION OF POSITION ON EXPORT TAX EXPRESSED TO OPIC IN WASHINGTON. ON INFORMAL BASIS LOCAL HALCO PEOPLE SEE REAL GOG NEED FOR DOLLARS AND CONJECTURE THAT MOST FRUITFUL LINE OF DISCUSSIONS MAY BE TO WORK WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF TAX TO FIND WAYS TO LESSEN ITS IMPACT. ONE PRACTICAL PROBLEM IS THAT DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES, CBG PRODUCTION WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN EXPECTED. SEE PARA 4 BELOW.

3. OPIC REP VISITED BOKE MINESITE ON TUESDAY. OPERATION IS RELATIVELY SIMPLE SINCE THERE IS NO OVERBURDEN AND BAUXITE LIES IN FLAT PLATEAU. BAUXITE IS BLASTED, DUG OUT AND SHIPPED BY RAIL APPROXIMATELY 125 KM TO KAMSAR FOR CRUSHING, DRYING AND SHIPPING. DAILY RATE OF SHIPMENTS THIS WEEK HAS AVERAGED ABOUT 250 CAROLADS.

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PAGE 02 CONAKR 00406 201611Z

4. VISIT CONCLUDED ON WEDNESDAY WITH TOUR OF KAMSAR FACILITIES. TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITH CRUSHER SYSTEM HAVE CAUSED CBG TO REDUCE ESTIMATE OF YEARLY PRODUCTION FROM 6 MILLION TONS TO ABOUT 4.3 MILLION TONS. CBG IS IN PROCESS OF INSTALLING HEAVIER AND STRONGER MATERIAL IN CRUSHER OPERATION SINCE THIS NEED WAS NOT ANTICIPATED IN ORIGINAL DESIGN. THE CALCINING OPERATION HAS NOT YET BEGUN ON MORE THAN A TRIAL BASIS BECAUSE OF A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED PERSONNEL. STORAGE CAPACITY AT KAMSAR IS LIMITED TO LESS THAN ONE MILLION TONS WHICH WOULD BE SLIGHTLY MORE THAN ONE MONTH'S SUPPLY.

5. IN SUMMARY CBG OPERATIONS STILL HAVE SEVERAL SERIOUS TECHNICAL PROBLEMS TO RESOLVE BEFORE ENTIRE SYSTEM CAN BE SAID TO BE OPERATING SMOOTHLY AND EFFICIENTLY.

6. AFTER DISCUSSION WITH CHARGE IT DID NOT APPEAR THAT OFFICIAL VISITS WITH GOG BY OPIC REP WOULD SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE AT THIS TIME.

7. ONCE OPIC IS APPRISED OF FRIGUIA AGREEMENT, PLEASE ADVISE EMBASSY OF FULL DETAILS.

MACDONALD

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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